

and became an ancestress of David. David, when in difficulty with King Saul, took his father and mother to the king of Moab for his protection (I Sam. 22:3-4).

So Isaiah's heart is touched with this prediction of the desperation of the Moabites. Isaiah paints a picture of thousands of weeping refugees fleeing their homes and cities, carrying what possessions they could hastily snatch up in a moment's desperation. They flee southward for asylum in Edom. The slaughter by the Assyrian armies rampages until the waters of Dimon are stained red with human blood! Those that remain in Moab, and even those that flee, have still more slaughter and destruction to come upon them. God will send "a lion" (probably the Babylonians and Persians to come) to hunt them down. Such is the destiny of proud and inhuman Moab!

QUIZ

1. What is Moab's origin?
2. What dealings did Moab have with Israel in Israel's early history?
3. How do Semitics demonstrate their grief?
4. What ties were there between Moab and Israel?
5. Where did the Moabites flee for refuge at the Assyrian invasion?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. MOAB (Continued)

b. INVITATION

TEXT: 16:1-5

- 1 Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
- 2 For it shall be that, as wandering birds, as a scattered nest,

- so shall the daughters of Moab be at the fords of the Arnon.
- 3 Give counsel, execute justice; make thy shade as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; betray not the fugitive.
- 4 Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; as for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the destroyer. For the extortioner is brought to nought, destruction ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.
- 5 And a throne shall be established in lovingkindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness.

QUERIES

- a. Why send lambs unto the mount of Zion?
- b. Who is to sit upon the throne in the tent of David?

PARAPHRASE

I counsel you Moab to send to Judah, the daughter of Zion, for help. Send a token of submission, a tribute of lambs, to the ruler of Judah. Unless you get help from Judah your panic and confusion will increase until you are absolutely helpless. You must say to Judah, Give counsel; grant that justice shall be done for us; give us such protection that it will be like a night-shade in the midst of the noonday; hide our outcasts and do not betray our fugitives. You must say, Let my neglected ones sojourn among you. Be a hidingplace for them from before the face of the destroyer. The oppressor and extortioner of Judah has been vanquished out of Judah's land and there is peace there now. And a throne will be established in steadfast love; and a man shall sit on it in truth and faithfulness from the family of David, ruling and judging in justice and eager to do righteousness.

COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **PREDICAMENT:** Moab's predicament is such that she is in a state of panic (Cf. Isa. 15:4). Confusion reigns. Isaiah's compassion for suffering humanity moves him to counsel Moab to plead with Judah for help. When Moab was formerly under the rule of Judah (II Kings 3:4ff) Moab paid tribute to Judah in the form of sheep and lambs. Judah protected Moab as long as this arrangement continued. But Moab revolted from the rule of Judah. Now Moab has suffered invasion and enemies are despoiling its people. Isaiah's advice is for Moab to turn in a submissive attitude, sending a tribute of lambs, to Judah and plead for Judah's help and protection. If Moab does not, her panic and confusion will increase until she is homeless like a bird whose nest is scattered!

v. 3-4 **PLEA:** Isaiah's advice continues. The prophet suggests even the words Moab is to use in its plea to Judah. Moab should ask Judah to do a risky thing. Moab is to plead with Judah to give asylum to the displaced refugees; hide them; protect them. Moab is to plead with Judah to act toward them as they never acted toward Judah. Moab is to ask for mercy, justice, compassion and sacrificial goodness.

In the middle of verse 4, Isaiah appears to redirect his dialogue from advising Moab to relating a new historical situation that prevails in Judah's case. Something had apparently occurred to relieve Judah (temporarily) of the oppression of the forces of Assyria so that Judah would be well able to give aid to the refugees of Moab. What caused this present availability of Judah is not recorded but the prophet assures Moab it is present.

v. 5 **PROMISE:** This is a very intriguing verse. It has been considered as a Messianic passage as far back as the time of the *Targum* (Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew texts which date in oral form back to the Persian captivities). Isaiah indicates it was taken for granted that the Moabites had some knowledge of the divine purpose in the nation of Judah. The account of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz confirms this. The Moabites were idolaters but they knew the nature of David's

throne. When a disaster faces men they are able to recall a much more complete knowledge of God's truth than at any other time. Isaiah seems to say, If you come to seek refuge under the wings of Judah we will give you a share even of the best that our heritage has to offer—our Messianic hope. Here is one of the many passages in the prophets where the truth concerning the Christ of the Jews is offered to those of other nations. Israel has a throne with a future, not like the unstable thrones of the most powerful nations round about. This one will be established by virtue of the steadfast love of Jehovah. The throne involves the "tabernacle" (house) of David (Cf. Amos 9:11)—the lineage of David. It involves the rule of One who will judge justly and righteously to a degree never displayed in any earthly ruler (Cf. Isa. 9:6ff; 11:1-10; Micah 5:2ff). The very fact that this Messianic hope was offered to Moab (a nation outside the Hebrew covenant) proves once and for all that the Messianic expectations as expressed by the O.T. prophets were not tenuous and vague—they were specific and clear!

QUIZ

1. Why does Isaiah intercede and direct Moab to seek help from Judah?
2. What are Isaiah's directions to Moab?
3. How is it possible for Judah, at this time, to give help to Moab?
4. What is so intriguing about verse 5?
5. Were the Moabites expected to understand the divine destiny of Israel?
6. How could Isaiah offer Messianic hope to Moab?

c. INSOLENCE

TEXT: 16:6-12

- 6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his wrath; his boastings are nought.
- 7 Therefore shall Moab wail for Moab, every one shall wail: for the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn, utterly stricken.
- 8 For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the nations have broken down the choice branches thereof, which reached even unto Jazer, which wandered into the wilderness; its shoots were spread abroad, they passed over the sea.
- 9 Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh; for upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest the battle shout is fallen.
- 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the fruitful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither joyful noise; no treader shall tread out wine in the presses; I have made the vintage shout to cease.
- 11 Wherefore my heart soundeth like a harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-heres.
- 12 And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself, when he wearieth himself upon the high place, and shall come to his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

QUERIES

- a. Why does Moab display such arrogance and pride?
b. Who is weeping in verse 9?

PARAPHRASE

The pride of Moab is well known. Moab is very proud, even to the point of arrogance and cruelty. Moab's boastful talk is not right. Moab will wail and mourn his own calamity—the whole nation shall wail bitterly because of this arrogance. Moab will be so utterly stricken down from its self-exaltation its famous raisin-cakes and vineyards will be disregarded by everyone. As a matter of fact, the armies of its enemies will tear down and march over those huge, famous vineyards and completely devastate the land. So I will wail and weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah. My tears flow for Heshbon and Elealeh, for destruction has come upon their summer fruits and harvests with the battle shout. Gone will be the gladness, gone the joy of harvest. The happy singing in the vineyards will be heard no more; the treading out of the grapes in the wine presses will cease forever and the customary shout of *heydad* at the reaping of the vintage will be caused to cease. Mourning for Moab and its people sweeps over my soul like the funeral music that mournfully sweeps across a harp. No last minute appeal to Moab's gods will avert the inevitable judgment of Jehovah upon his arrogance. Even though the whole nation presents itself and cries with much repetition he shall not prevail.

COMMENTS

v. 6-8 ARROGANCE: The haughty pride of Moab was well known. See Isaiah 15:1-9. Moab's pride led to arrogance, ungodly boasting (even to the point of "magnifying himself against the Lord (Cf. Jer. 48:42), and to cruel wrath. Moab evidently paid no attention to the invitation of God's prophet (Isaiah) to call for help from Judah in a submissive penitent attitude. And, in spite of the terrible warnings of complete destruction, Moab refused Judah's help. Moab was also famous for its large and luxurious vineyards. It was famous for a delicacy known as "raisin-cakes" which it exported throughout the world. The

prophet predicts that these things in which Moab gloried and upon which he depended so much, would soon be completely trampled under the feet of enemy nations marching in conquest of their land.

v. 9-12 AGONY: There is in all of us a sentiment akin to agony and horror when we realize there is no hope for the impenitent and rebellious. This was true of Isaiah. Not all Jews hated their enemies! Agony and sorrow swept across the heart-strings of Isaiah with such mournfulness as one hears sweeping across the strings of a lyre played at funerals. Genuine tears of compassion would flow from the eyes of this sensitive man of God for a people about to be debased because of their arrogance. By faith, the prophet could understand God's revelation of the deep pain and suffering that was about to come upon the Moabites. Isaiah knew that all their flippant, boastful rejoicing in prosperity and abundance would be turned into wailing and lamenting. There would be a cessation of the exuberance shown at every harvest of the vintage. In Israel and Moab the *heydad* was the peculiar shout raised by those that trod out the grapes in the wine-press. As each foot stamped into the wine-press, this word gave the accompanying shout, which was quite naturally a joyful and enthusiastic one. In place of the joyful harvest shout will be heard the "battle shout." In their hour of complete devastation the Moabites will go to their pagan sanctuaries and cry out in repetitious prayer to their pagan gods until they are "wearied" with praying, but to no avail. Their wails will be those of those who have no real god, no hope and help.

QUIZ

1. How far had Moab carried its pride and arrogance?
2. What did it have to be so arrogant about?
3. Why was Isaiah agonizing about Moab's fate so?
4. What contrast did Isaiah make about the cessation of joy in Moab?

d. INEXORABLE

TEXT: 16:13-14

13 This is the word that Jehovah spake concerning Moab in time past.

14 But now Jehovah hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account.

QUERIES

- a. What word had Jehovah spoken in time past?
- b. What are the "years of a hireling"?

PARAPHRASE

Jehovah has spoken many times and long in the past the doom of Moab. And now it is about to be fulfilled. Precisely within three years (as precisely as the hired laborer keeps track of his contract) the glory of Moab will be turned into contempt. The once proud Moabites will be a spectacle of defeat and shame. Only a very small and insignificant remnant will be spared.

COMMENTS

v. 13-14 **ABASEMENT:** Isaiah declares that the abasement of Moab spoken so agonizingly in verses 6-12 had been predicted by Jehovah many times in the past. Moab's demise is predicted as far back as the Pentateuch. Now the time limit is precisely ascribed. Three years hence! We do not know exactly when Isaiah made this prophecy. The defeat he refers to was administered at the hands of Shalmaneser IV (727 B.C.) or his successor,

Sargon II (722 B.C.), potentates of Assyria. Moab, after the Assyrian conquests, became a wasteland, inhabited by nomadic tribes of desert-people. It remains so to this day. A very small remnant of Moabite people mixed with other nomadic peoples of that area and became the progenitors of those nomadic tribes inhabiting that deserted area today. God keeps His word!

QUIZ

1. How far back in the past had Jehovah declared Moab's doom?
2. Approximately when did Isaiah write this precise prediction?
3. What happened, eventually, to the Moabites?

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

2. DAMASCUS

a. COALITION

TEXT: 17:1-6

- 1 The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.
- 2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.
- 3 And the fortress shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith Jehovah of hosts.
- 4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
- 5 And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the standing grain, and his arm reapeth the ears; yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears in the valley of Rephaim.
- 6 Yet there shall be left therein gleanings, as the shaking of an olive-tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost